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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/419,305	10/15/1999	KAZUHIKO MARUTA	MARUTA=3C	1033

1444 7590 02/11/2003

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EXAMINER

PROUTY, REBECCA E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1652

DATE MAILED: 02/11/2003

24

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.  
**09/419,305**

Applicant(s)  
**Maryta et al.**

Examiner  
**Rebecca Prouty**

Art Unit  
**1652**



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a): In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Dec 4, 2002
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.  
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).  
\*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).  
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_ 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 12-10-02 has been entered.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 is indefinite in the recitation "similar but not identical to SEQ ID NO:1" as it is unclear how many changes in sequence are necessary before an enzyme is no longer "similar"

Claim 1 is indefinite in the recitation of "DNA which hybridizes" as this term is unclear absent a statement of the conditions under which the hybridization reaction is preformed. Nucleic acids which will hybridize under some hybridization conditions will not necessarily hybridize under different conditions. As such the scope of DNAs which meet this limitation would vary depending on the conditions and the scope of the claim is unclear.

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Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for the enzyme of SEQ ID NO:1 or enzymes encoded by genes which will hybridize to SEQ ID NO:2 under specific conditions, does not reasonably provide enablement for any enzyme with the claimed properties.

These claims are so broad as to encompass any enzyme with the claimed physicochemical properties which contains two or more contiguous amino acid residues from SEQ ID NO:3 or SEQ ID NO:4 and hybridizes to two degenerate nucleic acid probes under any conditions, including any naturally occurring enzymes with the claimed properties, fragments thereof which retain enzymatic activity and all functionally equivalent variants of such a naturally occurring enzyme. The scope of the claims is not commensurate with the enablement provided by the disclosure with regard to the extremely large number of enzymes broadly encompassed by the claims. Neither the specification nor the prior art provide any guidance regarding additional sources of naturally occurring enzymes with the claimed properties. One of ordinary skill in the art would clearly be aware that enzymes with similar enzymatic activities can be highly diverse and often bear little or no homology to one another. This is particularly true where the enzymes are found within organisms which are evolutionarily highly diverse but is not uncommon even for two

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enzymes with the same organism or for enzymes encoded within evolutionarily similar organisms. As such one of ordinary skill in the art would be unable to isolate such enzymes and their corresponding genes without undue experimentation to find a suitable source. Furthermore, the specification fails to provide enablement for all variants and fragments of the enzyme of SEQ ID NO: 1. Since the amino acid sequence of a protein determines its structural and functional properties, predictability of which changes can be tolerated in a protein's amino acid sequence and obtain the desired activity requires a knowledge of and guidance with regard to which amino acids in the protein's sequence, if any, are tolerant of modification and which are conserved (i.e. expectedly intolerant to modification), and detailed knowledge of the ways in which the proteins' structure relates to its function. However, in this case the disclosure is limited to the nucleotide sequence and the amino acid sequence of a single enzyme with the claimed properties.

While recombinant and mutagenesis techniques are known, it is not routine in the art to screen for multiple substitutions or multiple modifications, as encompassed by the instant claims, and the positions within a protein's sequence where amino acid modifications can be made with a reasonable expectation of success in obtaining the desired activity/utility are limited in

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any protein and the result of such modifications is unpredictable. In addition, one skilled in the art would expect any tolerance to modification for a given protein to diminish with each further and additional modification, e.g. multiple substitutions.

The specification does not support the broad scope of the claims which encompass any enzyme with the claimed physicochemical properties because the specification does not establish: (A) regions of the protein structure which may be modified without effecting activity; (B) the general tolerance of such enzymes to modification and extent of such tolerance; (C) a rational and predictable scheme for modifying any amino acid residues with an expectation of obtaining the desired biological function; and (D) the specification provides insufficient guidance as to which of the essentially infinite possible choices is likely to be successful.

Thus, applicants have not provided sufficient guidance to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the claimed invention in a manner reasonably correlated with the scope of the claims broadly including any enzyme with the claimed physicochemical properties. The scope of the claims must bear a reasonable correlation with the scope of enablement (In re

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Fisher, 166 USPQ 19 24 (CCPA 1970)). Without sufficient guidance, determination of enzymes having the desired biological characteristics is unpredictable and the experimentation left to those skilled in the art is unnecessarily, and improperly, extensive and undue.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rebecca Prouty, Ph.D. whose telephone number is (703) 308-4000. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30 to 4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ponnathapu Achutamurthy, can be reached at (703) 308-3804. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 308-4242.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0196.



Rebecca Prouty  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1652